

REMARKS

Claims 2-3, 5, 8-13, 28 and 30-31 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 2-3, 5, 8-9 and 28 are amended and claims 1, 4 and 6-7 are canceled. No new matter is added.

I. Priority

Applicant requests that the Examiner acknowledge Applicant's claim for priority in the next Patent Office Communication.

II. Information Disclosure Statement

Applicant requests that the Examiner consider the references submitted with the March 5, 2002 Information Disclosure Statement and that the Examiner provide Applicant with a copy of the March 5, 2002 PTO-1449 form with the reference citations initialed as considered.

III. Allowed and Allowable Claims

Applicant appreciates the Office Action's indication that claims 30-31 are allowed and that claims 2-3, 5, 8-13 and 28 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

By this Amendment, claims 2, 8, 9 and 28 are rewritten in independent form, including the features of their base claims. Thus, claims 2-3, 5, 8-13 and 28 should be allowed.

IV. Claim Rejections

The Office Action (i) rejects claims 1, 4 and 6-7 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Japanese Patent Publication No. 09-264780 to Ema et al. (Ema); and (ii) rejects claims 6-7 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Ema in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,510,168 to Kikuchi. The Office Action refers to Ema as "Ema Nobuaki" or "Nobuaki" and cites the Application No. 08-077510 instead of the Publication No. 09-264780.

By this Amendment, claims 1, 4 and 6-7 are canceled, rendering the rejections moot.

Applicant requests withdrawal of the rejections.

V. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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